Spike & Mrs. Prickles

Common Name: African Pygmy Hedgehog

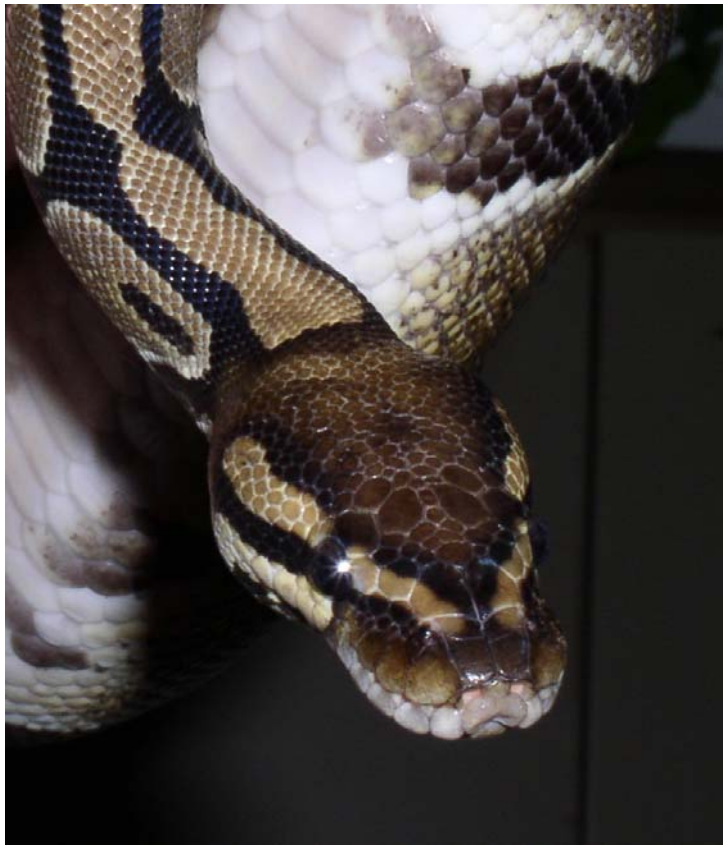
Scientific Name: *Atelerix albiventris* x *algirus*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Mammalia, Insectivora

Facts: African pygmy hedgehog pets are actually a hybrid of two species native to the savannahs of central Africa: white-bellied hedgehogs and Algerian hedgehogs. Hedgehogs are nocturnal and feed on worms, insects, fruits, roots, and even small frogs and snakes. The average lifespan is 3–5 years.

Adaptations: The hedgehog's long snout is specialized for smelling and can detect food items underground. Their back is covered with spines (modified hair), and when threatened by predators, hedgehogs can roll up in a ball for protection.

JANET



Common Name: Ball Python

Scientific Name: *Python regius*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Reptilia, Squamata

Facts: Ball pythons are native to the savahhans of Africa. These snake are ground-dwelling and spend most of their time in mammal burrows. Ball pythons can live 25+ years and reach about 4 feet in length. They feed primarily on small mammals.

Adaptations: the ball python is named so because when threatened, it coils up into a ball. Heat pits located on the upper and lower lip scales, which sense infrared radiation, are used to detect prey.

ROCKY

Common Name: Boa Constrictor

Scientific Name: *Boa constrictor*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Reptilia, Squamata

Facts: Boa constrictors are found in Central and South America. They live about 30 years and grow 8-10 feet long. They prey upon vertebrates including birds, mammals, and lizards. Boa constrictors are viviparous meaning they give birth to live young.

Adaptations: Boas (and pythons) are primitive snakes. Small spurs located near the cloaca are vestegial (remnant) hind legs and are used by males during mating. Also like pythons, boas have heat pits located on their lip scales.

Mama

Common Name: Long-tailed Chinchilla

Scientific Name: *Chinchilla lanigera*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Mammalia, Rodentia

Facts: Chinchillas are native to the Andes Mountains of South America where they live in burrows and rock crevices. The coat of chinchillas is extremely dense and soft, and as many as 60 hairs grow out of one follicle. Because of this, chincillas were nearly hunted to extinction in the wild for the fur trade. Today, chinchillas are no longer hunted, but remain endangered. In the wild chinchillas eat plants and insects. Captive chinchillas live about 15 years.

Adaptations: Chinchillas have large hind feet which allows them to jump up to 5 feet.

Pepe'

Common Name: Durango Mountain Kingsnake

Scientific Name: *Lampropeltis mexicana greeri*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Reptilia, Squamata

Facts: This snake is found in high elevations in the mountains of Durango, Mexico. It has a light grey background color with black-edged red/orange bands. They grow to 2-3 feet and live for 30-40 years.

Adaptations: Kingsnakes are opertunisitic feeders and eat snakes, lizards, rodents, birds, and eggs. The "king" in their name refers to their ability to eat other snakes, including venomous snakes. They can feed on venomous snakes because they are immune to the venom.

Maize

Common Name: Cornsnake

Scientific Name: *Pantherophis guttatus*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Reptilia, Squamata

Facts: Cornsnakes are native to the eastern United States where they can be common. However, in the Delmarva area, these snakes are endangered. Conrnsnakes can grow to be 4-6 feet, and live for about 15-25 yrs. They often eat mice or small rats.

ADAPTATIONS: CORNSNAKES ARE EXCELLENT CLIMBERS. THEIR BELLY SCALES ARE ANGLED AND PROVIDE EXCELLENT TRACTION FOR CLIMBING TREE BARK, ROCKS, AND EVEN THE SIDES OF BUILDINGS.

Maggie

Common Name: Western Painted Turtle

Scientific Name: *Chrysemys picta bellii*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Reptilia, Testudines

Facts: The western painted turtle is native to western North America. This turtle inhabits ponds, lakes, marshes, and slow-moving rivers with sotf muddy bottoms. Painted turtles grow 5-7 inches with females growing larger than males.

Adaptations: Male painted turtles are distinguished by their long fore-claws, which they use during mating. The male will swim above the female and reach forward with his front claws and tickle the female's cheaks. If she is receptive, she will swim to the bottom of the pond to mate.

Rita

Common Name: Red-Eared Slider

Scientific Name: *Trachemys scripta elegans*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Reptilia, Testudines

Facts: The red-eared slider is native to the Mississippi River watershed, where it inhabits any body of freshwater. Due to popularity in the pet trade, this species has been released many places all over the world, where it has established breeding populations, include some ponds in Delaware. The red-eared slider is distinguished by a red stripe located behind each eye. Red-eared sliders grow 5-10 inches with the females growing larger than the males.

Adaptations: Red-eared slider males are distinguised by their long fore-claws which they use during mating. The male swims backwards infront of the female while tickling her cheaks with his claws. If the female is receptive, she will swim to the bottom of the pond where they will mate.

Loco

Common Name: California Kingsnake

Scientific Name: *Lampropeltis getula californiae*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Reptilia, Squamata

Facts: California kingsnakes are found mostly in California. Typically, this snake is black and white banded, but Loco is a "striped albino." These snakes live for 15-20 years.

Adaptations: Kingsnakes feed on a variety of prey including snakes, lizards, rodents, birds, and eggs. The "king" in their name refers to their abilty to eat other snakes, including venomous snakes such as rattlesnakes, copperheads, and coralsnakes. They can feed on these snakes because they are imune to the venom.

The Professor

Common Name: Leopard Gecko

Scientific Name: *Eublepharis macularius*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Reptilia, Squamata

Facts: Leopard geckos inhabit dry rocky deserts and grasslands of northern India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. They are nocturnal and feed on a variety of invertebrates. Most live for approximately 20 years.

Leopard geckos are common in the pet trade and have been selectively bred to produce many different color patterns. The Professor is a "blizzard" leopard gecko. Blizzards are patternless and lack any color pigments.

Smoke

Common Name: Eastern Ratsnake

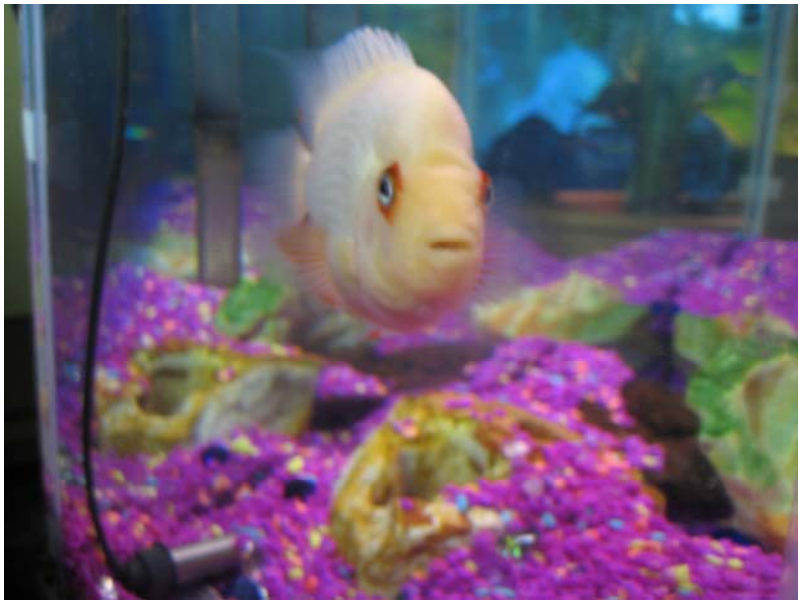
Scientific Name: *Pantherophis alleghaniensis*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Reptilia, Squamata

Facts: The eastern ratsnake (formerly black ratsnake) is native to the eastern United States including Delaware. It inhabits a wide variety of habitats including woodlands, meadows, and old buildings. Individuals have been seen here at the Delcastle property. The eastern rat snake is one of the largest snakes in North America reaching lengths of 8+ feet. Due to its ability to effectively catch and consume mice and rats, which are often considered pests, the eastern ratsnake is considered beneficail. Ratsnakes also feed on birds, reptiles, amphibians, and insects.

Adaptations: Like most snakes, Ratsnakes capture and hold their prey with their mouth and coil their body around their prey to kill it. Snake that kill their prey in this manner are called "constrictors." A common misconception is that snakes do this to suffocate their prey. But infact, the prey die from cardiac arrest (e.g., the prey are squeezed so tightly that their heart cannot beat).

Blanco



Common Name: Midas Cichlid

Scientific Name: *Amphilophus citrinellus*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Actinopterygii, Perciformes

Facts: The midas cichlid is native to Atlantic slope lakes of Nicaragua and Costa Rica in Central America. They are omnivorous feeding primarily on snails, small fish, and some plant matter. This species can grow to 10 inches and lives approximately 15 years.

Adaptations: Midas cichlids are territorial and very aggressive. When breeding, they form pairs and aggressively defend their eggs and young.

SKITTLES

COMMON NAME: BURMESE PYTHON

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *PYTHON MOLURUS BIVITTATUS*

KINGDOM, CLASS, ORDER: ANIMALIA, REPTILIA, SQUAMATA

FACTS: THE BURMESE PYTHON IS NATIVE TO SOUTHEAST ASIA, WHERE IT LIVES IN A VARIETY OF HABITATS AND PREFERS AREAS ASSOCIATED WITH WATER. THIS SNAKE IS ONE OF THE 5 LONGEST SNAKES IN THE WORLD GROWING UP TO 25 FEET. BURMESE PYTHONS ARE VERY POWERFUL ANIMALS, CAPABLE OF INFLICTING SEVERE BITES OR EVEN KILLING THEIR KEEPER.

ADAPTATIONS: PYTHONS HAVE HEAT PITS LOCATED ON THEIR LIP SCALES. THESE HEAT PITS SENSE INFRARED RADIATION AND ARE USED TO DETECT PREY. SMALL SPURS LOCATED NEAR THE CLOACA ARE VESTEGIAL (REMNANT) HIND LEGS AND ARE USED BY MALES DURING MATING.

Latisha and Skeeter

Common Name: Leopard Gecko

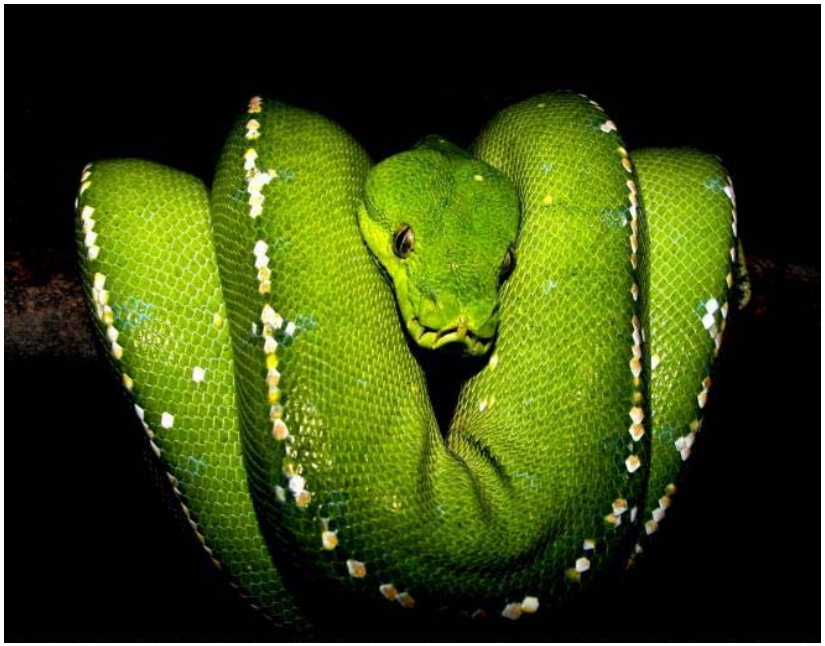
Scientific Name: *Eublepharis macularius*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Reptilia, Squamata

Facts: Leopard geckos inhabit dry rocky deserts and grasslands of northern India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. They are nocturnal and feed on a variety of invertebrates. Most live for approximately 20 years.

Adaptations: Unlike most geckos, leopard geckos have eyelids. eyelids are importants to protect the gecko's eyes from wind-blown sand and dust common in its arid environment. Leopard geckos store nutrient-rich fat in their tail for times when food is scarce. Like many lizards, leopard geckos can 'drop' their tail (autotomy) in order to escape predation. The tail will grow back (regenerate), but it is shorter and lacks vertebrate.

J. P.



COMMON NAME: GREEN TREE PYTHON

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *MORELIA VIRIDUS*

KINGDOM, CLASS, ORDER: ANIMALIA, REPTILIA, SQUAMATA

FACTS: THE GREEN TREE PYTHON IS NATIVE TO INDONESIA, NEW GUINEA, AND NORTHERN AUSTRALIA. THEY ARE ARBOREAL (TREE DWELLING) AND NOCTURNAL. WHEN THE GREEN PYTHON RESTS, IT LOOPS ITSELF SADDLE-FASHION OVER A BRANCH, ANCHORING ITSELF WITH ITS TAIL AND CRADLING ITS HEAD IN THE MIDDLE OF ITS DRAPED COILS.

ADAPTATIONS: GREEN TREE PYTHONS HAVE A PREHENSILE TAIL THAT ALLOWS THEM TO GRIP BRANCHES. BY WIGGLING THEIR TAIL, THEY CAN LURE CURIOUS PREY. THE PUPIL IS VERTICAL, WHICH DIALATES TO ALLOW FOR OPTIMAL VISION AT NIGHT.

Grave Digger

COMMON NAME: WESTERN HOGNOSE SNAKE

SCIENTIFIC NAME: *HETERODON NASICUS*

KINGDOM, CLASS, ORDER: ANIMALIA, REPITLIA, SQUAMATA

FACTS: THE WESTERN HOGNOSE SNAKE IS NATIVE TO THE WESTERN U. S. IT PREVERS OPEN SANDY HABITATS SUCH AS PRAIRIES. IT GROWS TO ABOUT 30 INCHES AND CAN LIVE UP TO 14 YRS. IN THE WILD. HOGNOSE SNAKES PREY ON AMPHIBIANS, LIZARDS, AND RODENTS, BUT TOADS ARE THE MAIN PREY MAKING UP TO 80% OF THE DIET. HOGNOSE SNAKES ARE REAR-FANGED VENOMOUS, BUT POSE NO THREAT TO HUMANS.

ADAPTATIONS: WHEN HOGNOSE SNAKES ENCOUNTER A POTENTIAL PREDATOR, THEY WILL FIRST HISS, AND FLATTEN THEIR HEADS AND NECKS TO MAKE THEMSELVES APPEAR LARGER. IF THIS FAILS TO WARD OFF THE PREDATOR, THE SNAKE MAY STRIKE--ALTHOUGH IT DOES NOT BITE. IF THIS FAILS, THE SNAKE WILL FEIGN DEATH BY ROLLING UPSIDEDOWN IN HOPES THAT THE PREDATOR WILL LOSE INTEREST.

HOGNOSE SNAKES USE THEIR UPTURNED SNOUT TO DIG AND FORAGE FOR FOOD. TOADS PRESENT A POTENTIAL FEEDING PROBLEM AS THEY INFLATE THEIR BODIES WITH AIR TO MAKE THEMSELVES TOO BIG TO SWALLOW. IN ORDER TO COUNTER THIS ADAPTATION, HOGNOSE SNAKES HAVE BIGGER TEETH IN THE BACK OF THEIR MOUTH TO PUNCTURE THE TOADS IF THEY INFLATE. ANOTHER ADAPTION ON THE SNAKE'S PART IS AN ENLARGED ADRENAL GLAND, WHICH FUNCTIONS TO COUNTER THE TOXINS FOUND IN THE TOADS' SKIN.

Elvira

Common Name: Eastern Diamond-backed Terrapin

Scientific Name: *Malaclemys terrapin terrapin*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Reptilia, Testudines

Facts: The diamond-backed terrapin is native to the East Coast of North America. It is one of the few species in the world that lives exclusivley in brackish water habitats, such as salt marshes. It is primarily carnivorous feeding on snails, mussels, and crabs. This turtles was once popularly consumed by humans in terrapin stew. However, overhunting led to a decline, and this species is now protected in most areas. Females often attain a length of 9 inches, while males usually reach a maximum of 5.5 inches.

Adaptations: Diamond-backed terrapins possess salt glands in their nose, which allows them to excrete excess salt absorbed from their environment.

Oliver

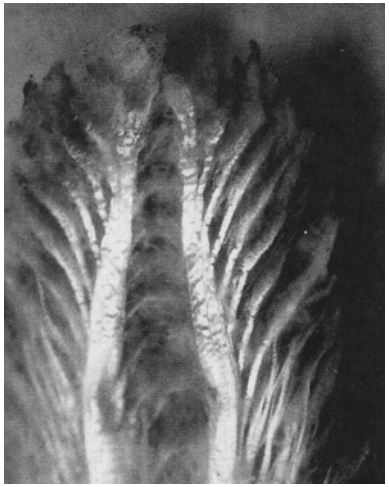
Common Name: Golden Gecko

Scientific Name: *Gekko ulikoviski*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Reptilia, Squamata

Facts: Golden geckos are native to the rainforests of Vietnam.

Adaptations: Geckos' toes are covered with microscopic spatulate shaped structures called setae. These structures cling to microscopic imperfections on even the smoothest surfaces, which allows geckos to climb almost anything and even walk upsidedown. Geckos' toes bend the opposite drection from our didgets, which allows geckos to peel their toes away from the surface as they walk.



Common Name: Axolotl

Scientific Name: *Ambystoma mexicanum*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Amphibia, Caudata

Facts: The axolotl is a species of mole salamanders native to 2 lakes in central Mexico. Unlike other mole salamanders, axolotl larvae fail to undergo metamorphosis, and the adults retain the juvenile characteristics, such as external gills, large tail fin, and no eyelids. Axolotls grow 9-12 inches and are carnivorous, feeding on prey such as worms, insects, and small fish. This axolotl was genetically modified to contain GFP (green florescent protein).

Adaptations: Although adult axolotls have lungs, the primary site for gas exchange (respiration) is through the external gills (located behind the head), which are lined with filaments that increase the surface area.

Common Name: Cuban Treefrog

Scientific Name: ***Osteopilus septentrionalis***

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Amphibia, Anura

Facts: The Cuban treefrog is the largest treefrog species found in North America and is native to Cuba and nearby Caribbean Islands. Cuban treefrogs have been introduced to Florida, where they are now abundant. These frogs are ferocious eaters, feeding on anything they can fit in their mouths, including other frogs and lizards.

Adaptations: The Cuban treefrog has a sticky skin secretion that is toxic. It easily adapts to living around homes, feeding on insects attracted to porch lights. The toe pads are well developed for climbing. Mucous is secreted from the pads, which helps them cling to dry surfaces.

Common Name: Zebrafish, Zebra Danio

Scientific Name: *Danio rerio*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Actinopterygii, Cypriniformes

Facts: The zebrafish is native to the streams of the southeastern Himalayan region. The zebrafish grows to 2.5 inches, lives for around 5 years, and produces 300-500 eggs per spawning.

GloFish Facts: Zebrafish were the first genetically modified animal to be publically available as a pet. These fish have a special gene that codes for a protein, which glows fluorescent under natural and ultraviolet light, inserted into their genome. The green fish have a green fluorescent protein gene that came from a jellyfish, which naturally produces bright green bioluminescence. The red fish contains a protein gene from a sea coral.

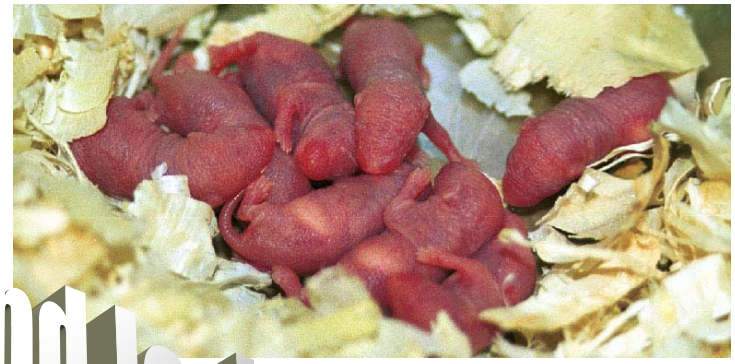
Common Name: Gerbil

Scientific Name: *Meriones unguiculatus*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Mammalia, Rodentia

Facts: The domestic gerbil originates from Mongolia, where it occupies semi-desert habitats. Gerbils were first brought to the U.S. in the 1950s for scientific study. In the wild, geribls live in social groups and are diurnal, retreating to their burrows at night and during the hottest part of the day. Gerbils typically live for 3-4 years.

Adaptations: The gerbil has long legs for jumping and running from predators, teeth to deal with hard seeds and plant matter, and water conservation adaptations that allow them to survive in the arid climate, such as storing water in layers of fat cells.



Gus and Jack

Common Name: House Mouse, Domestic Mouse

Scientific Name: *Mus musculus*

Kingdom, Order, Family: Animalia, Rodentia, Muiridae

Facts: The house mouse originated in Asia, but now occupies a worldwide distrtibution. House mice generally live in close association with humans– in houses, barns, granaries, etc. They also occupy cultivated fields, fencerows, and even wooded areas, but they seldom stray far from buildings. Because of their association with humans, house mice have been able inhabit inhospitable areas (such as tundra and desert) which they would not be able to occupy independently. House mice are the most commonly used animal for scientific study.

House mice have a polygynous mating system. Females generally have 5-10 litters per year if conditions are suitable, but as many as 14 have been reported. Gestation (pregnancy) is 19-21 days long. Litters consist of 3-12 (generally 5 or 6) offspring, which a re born naked and blind. They are fully furred after 10 days, open their eyes at 14 days, are weaned at 3 weeks, and reach sexual maturity at 5-7 weeks. Average life span is about 2 years in captivity, but individuals have lived for as long as 6 years. In the wild, most mice do not live beyond 12-18 months.

Common Name: Banana Plant

Scientific Name: *Musa* sp.

Kingdom, Order, Family: Plantae, Zingiberales, Musaceae

Origin: Southeast Asia

Facts: The banana plant can grow quickly reaching 25 feet in height in a year. It typically produces fruit 15-18 months after planting. After it flowers and fruits, the top portion of the plant dies and another plant sprouts up from the same roots to replace the previous plant. Banana plants are cultivated primarily for fruit, and to a lesser extent, for fiber.

The banana fruit grow in hanging clusters, with up to 20 fruit to a tier (called a *hand*). The total of the hanging clusters is known as a bunch, or commercially as a "banana stem". Bananas are a valuable source of vitamin A, vitamin B6, vitamin C, and potassium.

Common Name: Ficus Tree, Weeping Fig

Scientific Name: *Ficus benjamina*

Kingdom, Order, Family: Plantae, Urticales, Moraceae

Origin: South and southeast Asia south to northern Australia

Facts: The weeping fig is the official tree of Bangkok, thailand. It can reach 30 m tall in natural conditions. its small fruit are a favorite food of many birds. Weeping fig has been shown by NASA to effectively filter indoor air toxins.

Adaptations: The leaves are very sensitive to small changes in light. When it is re-located, it reacts by dropping many of its leaves and replacing them with new leaves adapted to the new light intensity.

Common Name: Cactus

Kingdom, Order, Family: Plantae, Caryophyllales, Cactaceae

Origin: North and South America

Adaptations: Cacti are adapted to extremely hot and dry environments. Their stems have expanded into green succulent structures which store water. A waxy coating on the stem prevents water loss. The stem is also where photosynthesis occurs. The spines are actually modified leaves, which protect the plant from predators. Many cactus species are night blooming, as they are pollinated by nocturnal insects or small animals, principally moths and bats. Cacti's sizes range from small and round to pole-like and tall.

Common Name: Frangipani / Plumeria

Scientific Name: *Plumeria rubra*

Kingdom, Order, Family: Plantae, Gentianales, Apocynaceae

Origin: Central America

Facts: The Hawaiian lei given apon arrival is often made of Plumeria flower petals.

Adaptations: Plumeria rely on sphinx moths to pollinate their flowers. Since sphinx moths are nocturnal, Plumeria increase their flower fragrance at night to attract the moths. The flowers, however, have no nectar, and simply dupe their pollinators. The moths inadvertently pollinate them by transferring pollen from flower to flower in their fruitless search for nectar.

Common Name: ZZ Plant

Scientific Name: *Zamioculcas zamiifolia*

Kingdom, Order, Family:
Plantae, Alismatales, Araceae

Origin: East Africa

Adaptations: The ZZ plant survives drought due to large potato-like rhizomes that store water. This plant is poisonous if ingested.

Common Name: Aloe

Scientific Name: *Aloe vera*

Kingdom, Order, Family: Plantae, Asparagales, Asphodelaceae

Origin: Northern Africa

Facts: Sap from the leaf can be used for herbal and medicinal purposes such as to treat various skin conditions like cuts, burns, and dry skin.

Common Name: Dragon Tree

Scientific Name: *Dracaena marginata*

Kingdom, Order, Family: Plantae, Asparagales, Ruscaceae

Origin: Madagascar

Facts: This plant was used in the NASA Clean Air Study and has been shown to help remove formaldehyde.

Common Name: Jade Plant / Friendship Tree

Scientific Name: *Crassula ovata*

Kingdom, Order, Family: Plantae, Rosales, Crassulaceae

Origin: South Africa

Adaptations: The jade plant is an evergreen succulent adapted to dry habitats.

Common Name: Dendrobium Orchid

Scientific Name: *Dendrobium* sp.

Kingdom, Order, Family: Plantae, Asparagales, Orchidaceae

Origin: Asia

Adaptations: These orchids are epiphytic ("air plants") meaning they attach or grow on other living plants rather than in the soil. Aerial roots anchor the plant and absorb moisture from the air. Pseudobulbs unite into a reed-like stem and store water.

Common Name: Corn Plant

Scientific Name: *Dracaena fragrans*

Kingdom, Order, Family: Plantae, Asparagales, Ruscaceae

Origin: West Africa

Facts: This species can grow 20 feet tall.

Common name: African Violet

Scientific Name: *Saintpaulia sp.*

Kingdom, Order, Family:
Plantae, Lamiales,
Gesneriaceae

Origin: Tanzania and Kenya

Facts: Several of the species are endangered, and many more are threatened, due to clearance of their native cloud forest habitat for agriculture.

Common Name: Pineapple

Sc ientific Name: *Ananas comosus*

Kingdom, Order, Family: Plantae, Poales, Bromeliaceae

Origin: South America

Facts: The pineapple is an example of a multiple fruit: multiple, spirally-arranged flowers along the axis each produce a fleshy fruit that becomes pressed against the fruits of adjacent flowers, forming what appears to be a single fleshy fruit.

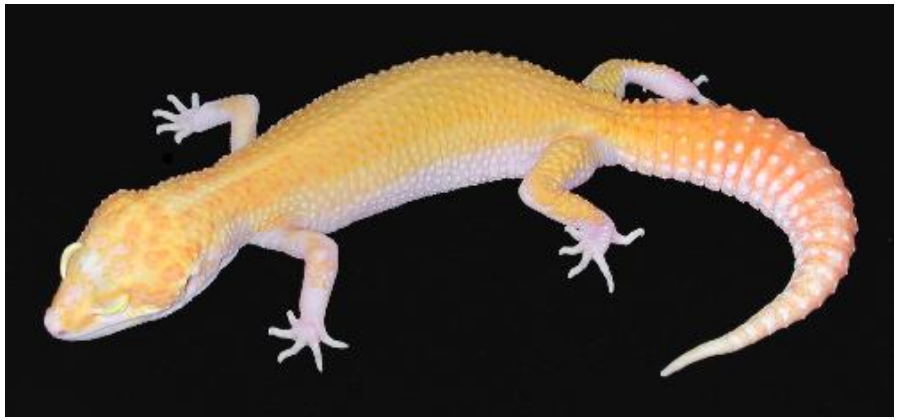
Frank

Common Name: Ball Python

Scientific Name: *Python regius*

Kingdom, Class, Order:
Animalia, Reptilia, Squamata

MAIYA



Common Name: "Hypo Tangerine" Leopard Gecko

Scientific Name: *Eublepharis macularius*

Kingdom, Class, Order: Animalia, Reptilia, Squamata